

best people available in place to analyze that, make a decision and move forward.

And instead, he waits a month to get a response from the Federal Government, builds the sand dam, and then they tell him to tear it down.

Mr. FRANKS of Arizona. Congressman, he waited 2 months before he met with BP. Two months.

Mr. AKIN. You're saying the President waited two months before he goes to meet with BP.

Mr. FRANKS of Arizona. And he should have been there at least within two days.

Mr. AKIN. Well, that's convenient, because then anything that doesn't work you can continue to blame BP. The problem is, there's all this oil all over the place, that little detail.

You know, I agree with you entirely. BP was wrong. What I'm not clear on, was it more of equipment or was it more human. I suspect from what I've heard, it seemed like it was more operator error than it was technology.

But, be that as it may, it seems to me that the only thing that eclipsed the foolishness and the incompetence of BP is the Federal Government response that's even worse.

Mr. FRANKS of Arizona. Well, it really is. And regardless of whose fault it was on the ground, regardless of whether it was a mistake made by the operator or by the driller or by one of those contractors there, the bottom line is that BP's the operator, so they're ultimately responsible. Again, everybody knows that. But this administration was focused on blame and political expediency rather than fixing the problem.

Mr. AKIN. Well, thank you gentlemen. I appreciate your joining me. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for allowing us to talk about budgets, but also about the situation in the gulf.

God bless you. Thank you. Good night.

#### FURTHER MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A further message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed and agreed to without amendment bills and a concurrent resolution of the House of the following titles:

H.R. 5569. An act to extend the National Flood Insurance Program until September 30, 2010.

H.R. 5611. An act to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend the funding and expenditure authority of the Airport and Airway Trust Fund, to amend title 49, United States Code, to extend authorizations for the airport improvement program, and for other purposes.

H.R. 5623. An act to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend the home-buyer tax credit for the purchase of a principal residence before October 1, 2010, in the case of a written binding contract entered into with respect to such principal residence before May 1, 2010, and for other purposes.

H. Con. Res. 293. Concurrent resolution providing for a conditional adjournment of

the House of Representatives and a conditional recess or adjournment of the Senate.

The message also announced that the Senate has agreed to a concurrent resolution of the following title in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. Con. Res. 67. Concurrent resolution celebrating 130 years of United States-Romanian diplomatic relations, congratulating the Romanian people on their achievements as a great nation, and reaffirming the deep bonds of trust and values between the United States and Romania, a trusted and most valued ally.

The message also announced that pursuant to Public Law 105-292, as amended by Public Law 106-55, and as further amended by Public Law 107-228, the Chair, on behalf of the President pro tempore, upon the recommendation of the Majority Leader, reappoints the following individual to the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom:

Dr. Don H. Argue of Washington.

#### TOPICS OF THE DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CRITZ). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, the gentleman from California (Mr. GARAMENDI) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, thank you so very much for this opportunity.

I've been here for the better part of this last hour and I've heard some astounding, astounding accusations and things that are purported to be fact. And I'm just going, What in the world is happening here?

To think that the President of the United States is to blame for the blowout is the most extraordinary leap of logic you could possibly imagine. For the last 15 minutes, we've heard about the President didn't do this, the President didn't do that, the experts were not assembled.

That's just not true. If you knew what was going on, instead of just flapping your lips, you would know that, in fact, shortly, very shortly, within days and hours after this blowout occurred, the best minds in America were assembled in Houston and in Louisiana to deal with this.

The fact of the matter is there is a very, very good reason for the moratorium and, in fact, my colleagues on the Republican side here said the reason. They didn't know why this occurred. Was it human error? Was it a fact? Was it a problem on the rig? Was it a problem down at the bottom? They don't know. And, in fact, we don't know today, and that's why we have a moratorium. We have a moratorium because we don't know why this blowout occurred. We have pretty good evidence that the blowout preventer didn't work. We have pretty good evidence that the efforts of the various methods, the standard methods of dealing with

the blowout didn't work. We don't know exactly why this well failed. And until we do know, we ought not be drilling in deep water because we certainly cannot afford another blowout.

Now, in 2008, in the Republican administration, two T-38 jets crashed within 2 weeks. The United States Air Force put every one of those T-38s on the ramp and said, You're not flying those airplanes until we know why they crashed. That's called a stand-down. It's called a moratorium. So we have a moratorium.

BP's to blame for this. And I must tell you, I am just absolutely astounded by what the Republican Caucus put together that was actually announced by our colleague from Houston, Texas, the ranking member of the House committee, when he apologized to British Petroleum because the President demanded that British Petroleum put together a \$20 billion trust fund to pay for the damage.

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The Republican policy is to apologize to BP for the President forcing BP to do what was right, that is pay for the damages. That's just but one issue. I wasn't going to talk about this in great length, but I am just coming off listening to my Republican colleagues here. We have to deal with the facts as they really exist.

Joining me tonight is Congressman ELLISON from one of the great northern States in the Midwest. And I think he wants to pick up this issue and maybe carry it a little longer.

Mr. ELLISON. If the gentleman will yield, I do just want to take up this issue of the spill. It is an important issue. And you just mentioned the very frank and I believe honest comments of Representative BARTON, the ranking member of the Energy and Commerce Committee, in which he apologized to BP.

Some people might be thinking, you know, well, he apologized for his apology, so, you know, why don't we just drop it. But it doesn't start with Mr. BARTON, it doesn't end with Mr. BARTON. It actually started with the Republican Study Committee, which creates policy, agenda, and talking points for the Republican leadership. And that's headed by a gentleman who is a Member of this body named Congressman PRICE, TOM PRICE. He is the one, with the help of the committee itself, not just by himself, who released a statement calling the compensation fund that you referred to to help compensate small business people put out of business by this spill, and people who live on the gulf, people who suffered, a shakedown. So this term political shakedown emerges from the very leadership of the Republican caucus.

They say that President Obama is shaking down the British Petroleum, BP. And from that point, PRICE makes the statement, this is before BARTON ever does, but PRICE says, "BP's reported willingness to go along with the